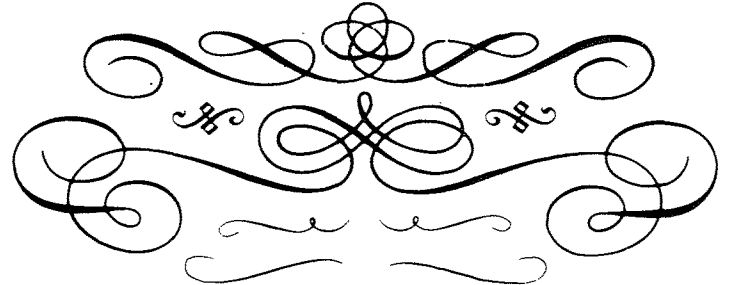


**Through the Years  
in the  
“Little Red  
School House”**

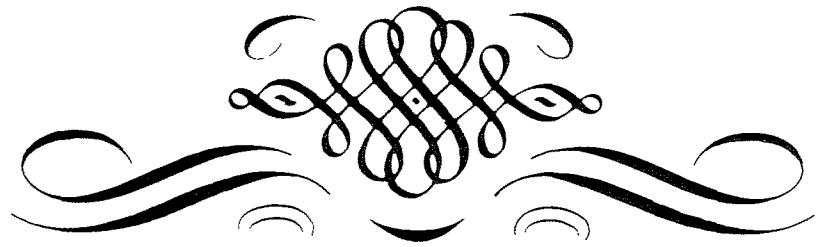
**Hickory School**  
1997

*Courtesy of Fort Vance Historical Society*

*Through the Years . . .*



*in the*



*"Little Red School House"*



OUR EARLIEST PICTURE OF HICKORY SCHOOL  
(From 1916 Diploma)



THROUGH THE YEARS...

IN THE LITTLE RED SCHOOLHOUSE!

During this year of 1997, we have been doing much thinking about how things "used to be", not only as to how people dressed, the food they ate, the jobs they did...but how they thought, how they helped each other...and...how they were educated!

While it will be far from complete (or possibly even accurate), this short "history" of education within the immediate vicinity of Hickory and/or Mt. Pleasant Township is being written so that our children, grandchildren, and generations yet to come, will have some idea, however vague, of what it was like to "go to school"...way back then.

Much of the material contained in this writing is based upon other writings, namely: that of Edwin Swartz, who compiled a "brief history of education" which can be found in the sesqui-centennial history of Mt. Pleasant Township (compiled in 1981 under the general editorship of A.D.White) and to the aforementioned A.D.White (deceased), in his publication, Historical Sketches of Northern Washington County which was published in 1979. Without these two resources, this writing would not have been possible.

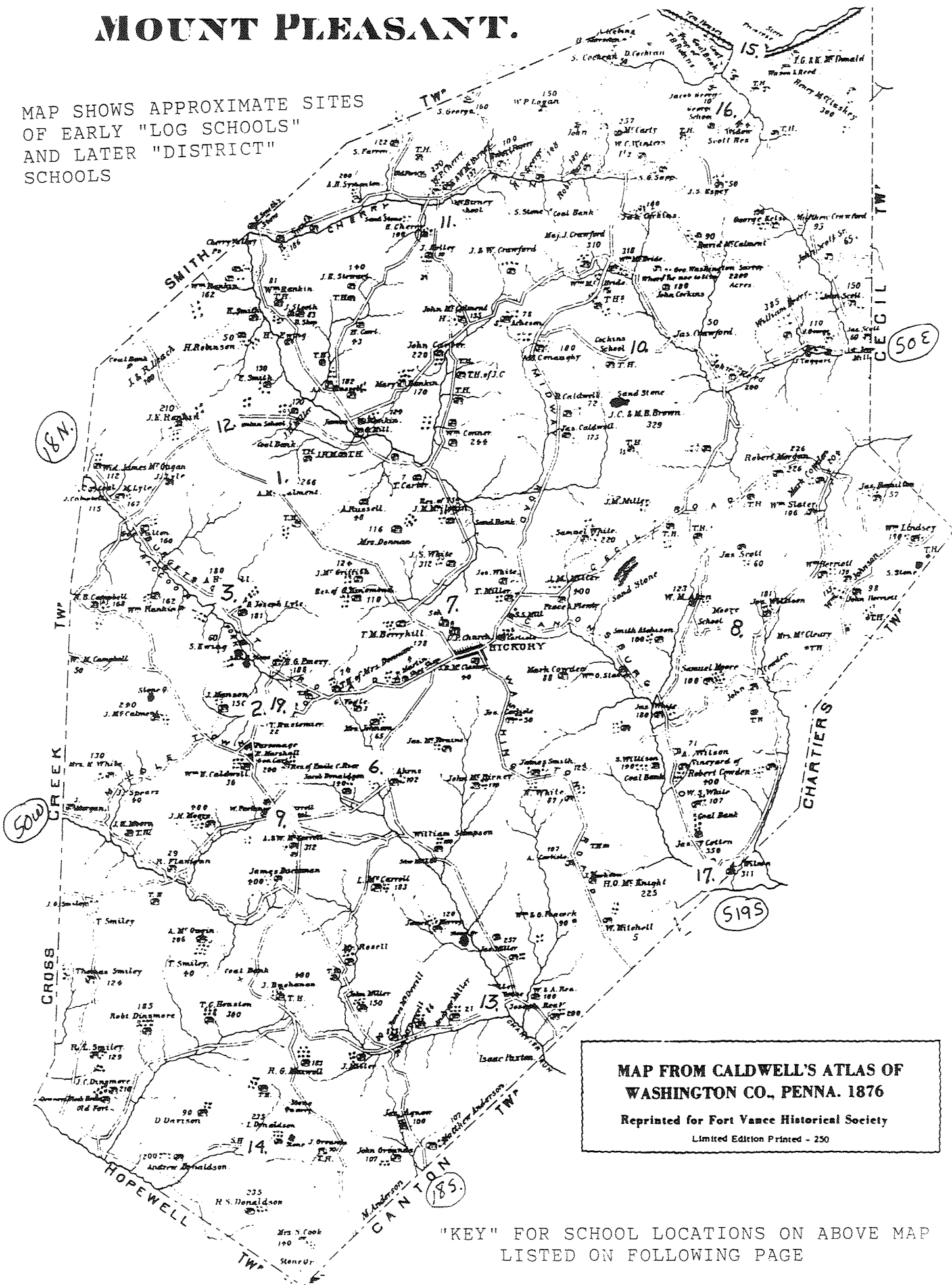
Should anyone, upon reading this history, find major errors or discrepancies, please let me know! Likewise, if anyone has additional material which they would like to contribute toward a more refined or complete record, such information would be greatly appreciated. The enclosed history has been compiled simply as a "basic set of running gears" containing the more general information which is available concerning education in our community.

Ruth White  
August 1997



# MOUNT PLEASANT.

MAP SHOWS APPROXIMATE SITES OF EARLY "LOG SCHOOLS" AND LATER "DISTRICT" SCHOOLS



"KEY" FOR SCHOOL LOCATIONS ON ABOVE MAP LISTED ON FOLLOWING PAGE

RE: CALDWELL ATLAS OF MT. PLEASANT TWP, @1876

Although the printing is difficult to read on the map itself, we have endeavored to indicate the **approximate** locations of the early schools of the area. Those which are **not** found on the map (and which, for the most part, were out of existence **before** the map was printed), have been marked with **relative** locations, based upon what limited information we now have. Anyone having more specific information as to their **probable** locations, please get in touch with us so that we can "up-date" or "correct" as needed.

"KEY" FOR MAP LOCATIONS OF EARLY "LOG SCHOOLS"  
AND LATER "DISTRICT" SCHOOLS

1. 1783 farm of John McCalmont
  2. 1797 near present Hickory U.P.Church
  3. @1800 "Poplar Hollow"; present Welch property
  4. @1800 farm of George Carroll (UNDETERMINED)
  5. @1801 farm of Joseph Knight (UNDETERMINED)
  6. ND farm of Jacob Donaldson
- DISTRICT SCHOOLS:
7. Hickory
  8. Moore
  9. McCarrell
  10. Cockins
  11. Cherry Valley (McBurney School on map)
  12. Rankin
  13. Miller
  14. Fort Donaldson
  15. Primrose
  16. George
  17. Westland
  18. Westfield (UNDETERMINED)
  19. 1837 Early ACADEMY near present Hickory U.P.Church

## THE EARLY YEARS:

If you should ask anyone living in Hickory, especially anyone under the age of 50 or a "transplant" from somewhere else, "When were the first schools started in Hickory?", you would probably be very surprised, indeed, if anyone answered "About 1800?". But, believe it or not, that would be a "pretty close" answer! (It might even indicate that they either knew more than they were letting on or had been reading this "history"!)

Actually, the records seem to indicate that there **were** "schools" of some description established soon after the pioneer settlers began to arrive in this area. As I have considered all of the information which Ed Swartz included in his article, "A History of Education in Mount Pleasant Township", found in the aforementioned sesqui-centennial history, I am taking the liberty of quoting from it quite frequently, with many sections being quoted **verbatim**, since many of you reading this have had no access to the other publication.

The beginnings of education in this area go all the way back to those early Scotch-Irish pioneers who came here from the Eastern parts of Pennsylvania, Maryland, and New Jersey as early as 1770. Although their material possessions were scanty, these early settlers of our community brought with them a rich heritage in their profound and strongly held ideas about religion, government and...education. In his book, "A History of Education in Pennsylvania", Wickersham says that the (earliest)schools were:

"without any controlling law on the subject, and therefore necessarily without systems, prompted by the wish to obtain at least some education for their children. Limited always by the scanty means at their command, our fathers built school houses, employed teachers and sent their children to school as best they could. The wonder is not that under the circumstances so many sections of the country were poorly supplied with schools, but that education was so general."

One of the earliest schools in Washington County was established in Mount Pleasant Township in the year 1783. This school was located on the farm of John McCalmont. (This would have been in a northern direction from Hickory, out Ridge Road past the Alvin Carter farm about halfway to Lee Robinson's "crossroads". SEE MAP) One of the pupils of this first school was Daniel Johnson of Indian descent, who was later a teacher in this same school. The subjects taught were: spelling, reading, writing, arithmetic, and the Old and New Testament.

This latter "subject" may come as a great surprise to those who have been in any way connected with education during the past several decades! However, with no Sunday School and very few books (indeed, if any) other than the Bible, these early settlers had no problems at all with such teaching. In fact, many of the earliest teachers in the local schools **were** the pastors of their churches! Also remember that the ink on the U.S. Constitution was hardly dry; in fact, it is doubtful that these settlers had read, or possibly even heard of, what was to be our "beacon" during the next century and a half...until the "light" of that beacon was dimmed by those who did **not** wish to be led by that or any other "light". Another "incredible fact" about this early school: the salary was \$12.00 a **month!**

The next school house, built about 1797, was located near where the Mount Prospect Presbyterian Church (the present Hickory U.P. Church) would be built some thirty years later. This second school was destroyed by fire after only a few years, but another house was soon built on the John Lyle farm to replace it. This **third** school was "in the big woods known as Poplar Hollow". (And for those of you who are not **up** on the local road system of 200 years ago...this farm was situated along Route 18 toward Burgettstown, presently owned by Dick and Jack Welch...the former site of the Meadowbrook Golf Course.) The first teacher of this school was John Dickey.

About the year 1800 another school was built on the farm of George Carroll. (Location as yet undetermined) The teacher was Samuel Lyle. Within a year a school was also built on the farm of Joseph Knight "on the old road". A man named McCready taught there in the year 1803. He was known as a severe disciplinarian and was "much feared by both the big and little scholars".

Within the next few years, several other school houses were built. One of these was on the farm of Jacob Donaldson, Jr. "on the State Road near Mr. Ornes". (Presumably this would be Mr. Ahrns, and the farm would be the present Kraeer farm on McCarrell Road.) Among the teachers were Thomas Merchant, who taught a number of years, and John Hoge who taught there during 1812 and 1813. Mr. Hoge is interred in the Hickory (Mt. Pleasant) graveyard. Other schools were located in loghouses on the farms of John Henderson, ( ) McClusky, Edward Cherry, and Edgar Rankin. (For those schools for which we have some knowledge as to location, please refer to the copy of the 1876 Township **map** located in the front of this booklet where we will show **at least** their approximate locations.)

These early school houses were built of logs, sometimes hewed and sometimes round (unfinished) with cabin (thatched) roofs, and a log left out on either side for a window opening. The seats were simple benches with no backs. The houses were built and furnished voluntarily by the people living within a radius of a few miles. The schools were sustained by subscriptions from the parents of the children attending. Consequently, the schools were soon known as "subscription schools" or by the term "common schools" which was generally accepted to designate the elementary grades as they are known today.

In the better-managed schools a "Day-book of Attendance" for each pupil was maintained by the teacher for the trustees of the school. Based on these records, tuition money was collected from those who were able to pay. Those unable to pay were allowed to attend free. Whatever money was needed to operate a particular school was raised by popular subscription through the trustees and paid out by them.

A number of these "day-books" for the **Cherry Valley School** were recently discovered in the attic of the home of Mrs. Louise Wilson, the former home of the late Dr. McElroy. Joseph McElroy was a teacher in this school in 1864, with a salary of \$25/month, presumably teaching to make enough money to continue his medical training. Several pages or "portions" from these "day books" are printed in the "picture section". The writing is too faint to read or copy on most of the pages.

In these early schools there was no attempt to classify students by grades. Each pupil came to the teacher in his order and said his lesson. There was little attempt at teaching, as we understand it. Blackboards, maps, globes were unknown.

The legible pages of these "Day Books" verify much of what has been written herein. Names of the boys were on one page, the girls on a separate page. Ages seem to range from 6 - 17...remember, they were **all in the same room with one teacher!** Surprisingly, attendance seems to have been "good", between 80 - 90%. The total number of students ranges in the 4 years of records from 27 - 36...again remember...ages, one teacher, one room, etc.!

For some reason the common schools in Mount Pleasant Township remained ungraded until the latter part of the century. At the 7th meeting of the Common School County Convention held in Hickory in 1855, a resolution was adopted "recommending the establishment of graded schools". Another resolution was adopted "recommending the Hickory school room as a model, and commending, as a rule, female teachers as equal to, and in many cases superior to males".

From the 1869 edition of the Pennsylvania School Report the following comment is made by the County Superintendent regarding ungraded schools: "There remain but two places that ought to have graded schools, Ten Mile Village and **Hickory**. Why the board of Mount Pleasant Township will not establish a graded school there, is past understanding, when it is remembered that there is a house built for that purpose, and the gentlemen composing that board are intelligent and earnest men."

The school house referred to in the preceding paragraph was erected at Hickory in the fall of 1855, and opened with ceremonies on December 3rd of that year. (It would seem to be that, even though the school house had been built as a "graded" school, it was still not being used as such some 14 years later!)



The Washington County Superintendent's report of 1856 mentions the erection of the model school building at Hickory with the following description:

"Size 40 ft. by 26 ft. with sash to let down as well as raise, 12 ft. ceiling, a plank wall upon the north side so as to afford an extended blackboard 40 ft. long, a platform in front of the blackboard, one step high and 3 feet wide, extending its whole length, the teacher's rostrum at the west end, towards which face the seats and writing desks". (NOTE: It was built to seat 100 pupils.)

The log schoolhouses in the various neighborhoods within Mount Pleasant Township continued in use at least until the year 1835. During this year the township voted in favor of the new Pennsylvania Free School Act of 1834. S\_\_\_\_\_ Wort and William Rankin were chosen as the first school directors of the township, (which) was divided into eight (8) districts and frame school houses were built in each district.

The names by which these schools were known were:

Hickory	McCarrell	Cockins	Cherry Valley
Moore	Rankin	Miller	Fort Donaldson
Primrose	George	Westland	Westfield

Note that there were 12 schools for 8 districts! These schools continued to serve the area for over fifty (50) years.

For the year ending June 7, 1869 the following statistics were reported in the Pennsylvania School Report of 1869:

<u>EXPENSE</u>			
Number of schools	10	Cost of instruction	\$2,100.00
Number of Teachers	11	Fuel & Contingencies	406.38
Average Salary	\$35.00	Miscellaneous	54.00
Pupil Attendance	241		
Monthly cost/pupil	1.33	<u>RECEIPTS</u>	
Property Tax	3.50 mls	Tax & Other Sources	\$2,434.64
		State Appropriation	178.50
		Debt of District	36.27

## ACADEMIES AS EARLY "HIGH SCHOOLS":

Early in the 19th century (1800's), "academies" began to spring up over the area, primarily to supplement the "common" schools. The majority of these "high schools" (for that is what they later became) were set up by local clergy so they could prepare young men who wished to go into the ministry. (This was particularly true in the early years of the academies.)

About the year 1828 the first **academy** was started in Hickory. It was on a private basis and under the direction of Rev. David Hervey, the first pastor of the newly organized Mt. Prospect Presbyterian Church. In 1837, Rev. John Moore, the second pastor of this church, erected a small building near the church which was used as a classroom for the academy. Other pastors of this church are known to have given instruction in "advanced classes" to the young people of the church and community. It is doubtful, however, that any organized school existed with any regularity.

It might be of interest to some of those reading this history, even though not directly related to education in Hickory, to include a few other facts about "academies" in general. Many of these schools were also known as "log colleges" and were, probably without exception, started as schools to prepare young Presbyterian men for the ministry. Space does not permit any extensive description of these "advanced schools" other than to state that Washington and Jefferson College is an example of a college with its "roots" extending back to these "academies" or "log colleges".

## INTO THE SECOND CENTURY:

Academies continued to exist as needed, but without any organized support of them. The Hickory Academy was formally organized as a school in 1891. Classes were held during the first year in the building partially occupied by the Retzer and Scott store. The next year an academy building was erected almost opposite this store building, and was used until 1915, when the "new high school" was built. (This second Academy building presently is the site of Jay Allison's store.)

The first class was graduated from the Hickory Academy in 1894. A total of 250 young people attended this school during its existence and 70 were graduated.

These academies rendered a service of great value to the community during these years which could have been performed in no other way. They provided for the valuable training of those leaders, yet-future, who would be developing the educational system which was to be the **foundation** upon which our present system would be built.

A NEW ERA, A NEW SCHOOL:

The minutes of the Mount Pleasant School Board in 1912 and 1913 pointed up the problems of overcrowded classrooms, need for repairs at the various district schools, pupil discipline, and "mischief" at the George and Primrose schools.

The minutes of 7-16-1913 approved a bid for erection of Fort Donaldson schoolhouse, 26 feet x 38½ feet, to D.E.McPeake for \$1,950.00. Minutes of 1-24-1914 state the reason for meeting "being on account of \_\_\_\_\_ (student) striking the teacher and blackening her eyes".

At the meeting of the board on 2-17-1914, the motion was approved "that we proceed at once to erect a modern school building in the vicinity of Hickory of brick and not less than 8 rooms". The school board members at this time were: Robert R. Hays, Charles C. Coates, Charles M. Berryhill, W.F.Caldwell, and J.A.Cooper.

In 1914 the Mount Pleasant Township Vocational and High School building was erected. The school was established under the authority of the Act of the Legislature of 1913 regarding vocational schools. At the time of its erection it was a 2-story, 12-room building. The School Annual of 1915 contains this report:

"This Building is the first of its kind in the western part of Pennsylvania, as it was designed especially to take care of the Vocational training of the students who elect this work. It contains a fine gymnasium and auditorium and the classrooms are modern in every respect. The new Vocational and High School building located at Hickory is one of the best of its kind in Pennsylvania."

The actual cost of this building was \$86,332.64 which was funded by the sale of \$85,000 in bonds and other revenues of \$4,701.25. In this connection it was approved by the Board that experienced carpenters' wages for the construction would not exceed 45¢ per hour. Charge for admission to basketball games was set at 10¢ and charge for tuition students was \$6.00 per month.

This building served the needs of the community of Hickory and Mount Pleasant Township until the late 1950's. At this time, the Fort Cherry School District was organized and a new Junior-Senior High School building was constructed at a cost of \$2,450,000.00. The "old" Hickory High School was converted into a centralized Elementary School for the township. Extensive remodeling was done in 1966 to meet the Pennsylvania Department of Education standards for safety.

Then, after almost 30 years of service as the Hickory Elementary School, and following the construction of the Fort Cherry Elementary Center next to the High School, the "school" in Hickory ceased to be...the end of an era had been reached. Even though both the Fort Cherry High School and Elementary Center were located **in** Mount Pleasant Township, there was a "**Hickory School**" no longer! A span of over 200 years had seen the development of the present "consolidated" system... a span **starting** with the first "log schools" which had been scattered over the region and ending with all students being bused to **one** central location.

The last meeting of the Mount Pleasant Township School Board was held on June 13, 1964, about 120 years from the time of the first board meeting following the Free School Act of 1834. The members of this last Board of Directors were:

Dr. John K. McCarrell, President  
Robert M. Brown, Vice President  
John T. Caldwell  
Edwin B. Swartz  
John Yanosik  
Vance M. Smith, Secretary  
John Punola, Treasurer

Guests at this last meeting included Dr. E.H.White, W.K.Allison, Jr., former board members, and George E. Baker, Supervising Principal of Mount Pleasant Township Schools for over twenty (20) years. Mr. Baker then became the Elementary Supervisor for Fort Cherry schools until his retirement in 1970. Counting his years as a teacher of vocational agriculture and then as "Principal", Mr. Baker served our community and the education of its children from 1937 - 1970, a span of 33 years!

## EARLY TRANSPORTATION IN THE DISTRICT:

### THE "KIDDIE WAGON":

One of the earliest "buses" used in the area was the so-called "kiddie wagon". It consisted basically of a farm wagon with a "top" built over the bench seats and drawn by a team of horses. The picture shown herein is one of the few available, and shows a "wagon" used for the McCarrell School. It is copied from an early "Year Book" of the Mount Pleasant Township Vocational School. (Please note: this "year book" was not what **we** think of as a "yearbook". It consisted of information about the school, the community, the "courses of study", a few pictures...but not of people.)

Before the era of the "kiddie wagon", children had several "choices" of transportation: they could walk (regardless of the weather), they could ride a horse (again regardless of the weather), or they could go by buggy or sled (still subject to adverse weather). The advent of this "new way" of getting to school was undoubtedly one of great anticipation, especially for the younger children.

Also pictured is an early "motorized" bus of the 1930's, owned and driven by Parker ("Park") Wilson, who, with his sons owned and operated several of these buses in the township. By today's standards very "primitive"...but they managed to get the children to school on time...usually.

Those children who were "blessed" to have "Park" for the driver were never sure what "story" would be told...whether it would be **new** or one from his vast repertoire which he used over and over to suit the occasion.

Buses did not make two runs, one for the high school students and one for grade school. Everyone along a particular **route** rode the bus on the same trip, regardless of grade in school. However, the route **did** determine whether a student was "early bus" or "late bus". Early bus students had their "first class" **before** the "late bus" arrived. Those riding the late bus had their "last class" **after** the early bus had gone. The children "in town", who **walked** to school, were "late bus". (No, their moms did **not** run taxi service simply because many of them didn't have **any** car, let alone two or three, and taking the kids to school was unheard of!)

The large, cast-iron bell now located in the front entrance hall of the "old school" was originally mounted on the roof of the school. In the morning, it was rung primarily for the "town kids" who were walking. It was also rung to signal the end of **noon hour** which was just that. It was an hour in length; kids could go "up street" to one of three small stores and get "penny candy", "town kids" could go home for lunch, dances were sometimes held in the gym, Intramural basketball (both for girls and boys), etc. Certainly not much of what happened during "noon hour" has been carried over into our "modern" schools... **especially** the sound of a large iron bell signaling that it was almost over!

In the Sunday magazine section of the Pittsburgh Press, dated October 26, 1956, there appears an article entitled "Bus Route to Success" by John Warren, Press Special Writer. The article features Mr. John R. Cowden and his rise from a fatherless farm boy to owner of a large trucking firm, including several school buses. The following paragraphs are quotations from this article, and provide additional information of interest in this vital area of "education".

"When John R. Cowden awakens to a quiet, snow-filled morning, his first thought is of the six school buses in the garage next to his home. But his buses are the best in modern school transportation. The drivers are all good men. So, if he wishes, John Cowden, of Hickory, Pa., can turn over in bed and go back to sleep again.

Such was not the case when he was the boy of 12 who drove the **school wagon**."

Following his father's death when John was only three, his mother sold the family farm and moved into Hickory with her five children. At about the age of 10, the boys (3 of them) each started to work for a nearby dairy farmer, milking cows (that's spelled **by hand**) and, in the summer, helping with the field crops. The article continues:

"John's cousin had the township school transportation contract in those days. The contract called for the daily delivery to school and a return trip home for 25 young students of Hickory school. Equipment needed to fulfill this contract consisted of a wagon, two horses and a driver. When John was 12, he went to work for his cousin as driver of the school wagon.

Until then it had taken him but a few minutes to get to school. But now, he had to arise before daylight at 4:30 in the morning, walk the mile to the stable, hitch his team to the wagon and start off on his route.

The school wagon had a passenger body similar to our present buses--except that the horses were guided with the reins through a slot in the front of the wagon, and the seats were hard wooden benches.

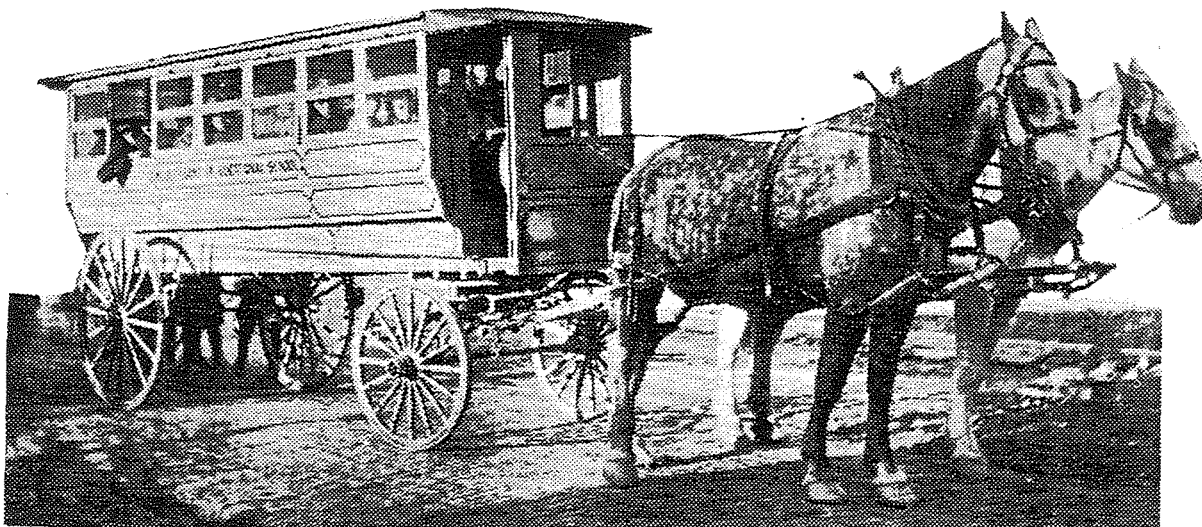
By about six o'clock young John would have the wagon on the road. First stop would be his home. John would hitch the horses to the post outside the door and go into the kitchen and open his mother's oven. In the oven were 25 hot bricks like common building bricks. A few at a time, John would carry the hot bricks outside and insert the bricks into small, tin, carpet-covered boxes beneath each seat. These were the foot-warmers, one for each of his young passengers. (This routine, of course, was necessary only in the winter.)

**Three hours** later, if the weather was favorable, John would deposit his schoolmates before the Hickory School. From stable to school, the route was 12 miles.

John's cousin met him at school to relieve him of the horses and wagon, and John would start his lessons with a half-day's work already behind him."

Following his graduation from Hickory High School in 1925, John attended Carnegie Tech (now Carnegie-Mellon) for one year, but his "true love" was trucks! From that point on, "trucks and buses" was the name of the game. It can be further noted that, following John's death, his wife, Mabel, took over the business of running the buses for the Fort Cherry School District. When the current contract runs out in 1998, Cowden buses will have been providing superb bus service for area school children for over 60 years...and, counting the earliest years with the horse wagon minus the 10-year span when John was **not** involved with bus transportation, the total climbs to 70 years!

"KID WAGON" FOR MCCARRELL SCHOOL:  
@1919-1920



Mount Pleasant Township has now transported successfully for six years the children from several rural schools. The State now pays 50% of cost of transportation. There are now three school wagons and one school auto bus running to and from the school.



## THE RANKIN SCHOOL:

Among the early "log schools" or "one-room" schools was the Rankin School. The following article appeared in the August 13, 1888 issue of the "Burgettstown Enterprise - Call":

### "The Semi-Centennial of the Rankin School

The pupils and teachers of the Rankin School in Mount Pleasant Township, who trudged to this school through the winters of past years, held a reunion on July 15th to celebrate the semi-centennial of the organization of the Rankin School in 1838.

The Hickory Concert Band enlivened the program with good music. A fine speaker's stand was erected under the old oak tree, and the odor of boiling coffee was suggestive to the orators that brevity would be the order of the day, and they took the hint. One thousand people dined free, and on the table was ample provision for as many more.

John Stevenson, Esq. was the first teacher and eight of the boys who attended school here in 1838 were present for the reunion. These were J. Reed Lyle, Joseph Robinson, D. C. Fulton, Daniel McGugin, William Rankin, Hugh Ewing and Alex. Richardson. Miss Hannah Robinson of Burgettstown is the only surviving lady of this Class of 1838."

Therewith follows a "complete list" of the teachers who had served at the Rankin School during the preceding 50 years. We will not include the entire list in this account, but will include a few excerpts and brief notes about it.

- |      |   |
|------|---|
| 1838 | John Stevenson (summer); Henry Robinson, Sr.  |
| 1839 | Henry Robinson, Sr.; Samuel Speers  |
| 1840 | Andrew Hays   |
| 1841 | Andrew Hays; George McCluskey   |
| 1842 | George W. Scantlin (short term); Andrew Miller  |
| 1843 | Samuel Rankin   |
| 1844 | John Craig  |
| 1845 | Rev. William F. Morgan  |
| 1846 | Miss Mary McConaughey   |
| 1847 | James White; Alexander Hays   |
| 1848 | Henry Woods   |
| 1849 | Edward Campbell; Rev. Samuel McFarland<br>(Rev. Dr. McFarland later became a missionary in Bangkok, Siam, now Thailand)                 |
| 1852 | Miss Sarah J. Douglass (summer term)  |
| 1853 | Preston B. Smith (summer term)<br>James E. Stevenson (winter term)  |
| 1855 | John H. Johnston (known as "School-teacher Johnston")<br>Mr. Johnston <b>also</b> taught here in 1856, 1857, 1859, 1860, 1861, and 1862 |



As can be noted thus far: most of the teachers were men; few of the teachers served more than one year; there was little, if any, continuity from one year to the next; there were **summer** terms.

From 1863 to the end of the list, 1888, the majority of the teachers were **women** not men. This brings to mind that quotation earlier, from the minutes of the 1855 meeting of the Common School County Convention, in one of its resolutions that "as a rule, female teachers (are) equal to, and in many cases superior to males". It can only be surmised that this became a prevalent belief, not only at the Rankin School, but throughout schools beyond Mt. Pleasant Township, or even Washington County.

We must keep this in proper perspective, however, and remember that these "common schools" were primarily for the younger children. Very few boys would have gone through more than, perhaps, what would be 5th or 6th grade now. Likewise, there was no "high school", and the "academies" were mostly for boys (although some girls did attend) who wished to enter the ministry, etc. It must also be noted that all of the female teachers were **single** women; once they married, they were no longer permitted to teach!

The history contained in the above article on the Rankin School shows that it was typical of the dozen or so one-room schools then being conducted in Mt. Pleasant Township. Often a summer term would be held, and the winter term was broken with school not being held during the colder months due to heating problems.

Usually good teachers were employed. In the case of the Rankin School, several of the teachers were from the local area: Young people who took time off from their own education to teach a year or two to secure money that they might go on to school. Several of these teachers at Rankin School became well-known and successful in their later careers, notably the Rev. Samuel McFarland who became Superintendent of English Education for the Government of Siam, the Rev. Elgy V. Campbell, and the well-known "School-teacher" Johnston.

The majority of these early "one-room" schools of the township have long since gone the way of old wooden buildings. Although they were not all **closed** at the same time, by **1958** all students were being transported to Hickory, both for "grade school" and "high school"... and then, only one year later (Fall 1959), the **high school** students were transported to the "new" Fort Cherry High School.

The dates of the **closing** of the "one-room" schools and the out-lying elementary schools are as follows:

McCarrell - 1914	Cherry Valley - 1918	Cockins - 1918
Moore - 1919	Rankin - 1919	Miller - 1929
Fort Donaldson - 1929		
Primrose - 1954	Southview - 1958	Westland - 1958

At least two of these "one-room" schools were **not** of frame construction but of **brick** and are still standing. The McCarrell School is the home of Mrs. Mabel Cowden on Route 18 toward Washington. The other was the Fort Donaldson School which was the last one built, in 1913, and is the present home of Mr. & Mrs. John Popp, located on Dairy Road in the southern end of the township.

CLASSES TAUGHT IN THE TOWNSHIP SCHOOLS @1906 - 1915:

In a booklet entitled "COURSE OF STUDY FOR MOUNT PLEASANT TOWNSHIP SCHOOLS", apparently for the year 1907, several items are to be found which should be of great interest to us now, 90 years later. The "PREFACE" to the booklet reads as follows:

"The new education differs from the old as a self-binder differs from a sickle. The new civilization in which we live demands a preparation unlike that of sixty years ago, in respect both to complexity and kind.

This fact makes necessary on the part of those engaged in the great work a most careful study of the educational problems of the day. The aims, principles and methods of education are becoming clearer as the scientific study of psychological and pedagogical truth advances through the patient toil of tireless students and teachers in the great field of modern thought and action. We must catch the spirit of progress.

To fit the boys and girls for successful careers; to give them 'power to think'; 'strongly developed and refined sensibilities and an ethical nature fully aroused'; to give them permanent interests in nature, art, literature and life, these are the comprehensive aim and purpose of the organism known as the Public School."

On the pages following this gloriously erudite "Preface", there are presented "outlines" for the basic "Courses of Study" for the first eight years of "Public School". One cannot help but wonder what would happen in the world of the approaching "New Millennium" if our present-day students faced...and conquered...the same far-reaching "goals" placed before those students of so long ago.

Granted, the "world" of the students of 1907 and the "world" of the students of 2000 are, in reality, "worlds apart". However, as we reflect on the history of education in Hickory and the surrounding area, we cannot help but draw parallels, or at least try...and somehow, we can only ask the question: "Are we as "far ahead" in the field of education as we **think** we are?" Only time will tell.

Herewith you will find two pages of the above-mentioned "Courses of Study" reproduced for your enlightenment and "wonder". We are including "First Year" (i.e., Grade 1), "Second Year", "Fourth Year", and "Eighth Year". Note in particular the way in which each year's study keeps building on those of the previous year, as well as the stress given to **mental** work...both in arithmetic and in comprehension of the written word in literature.

FIRST YEAR.

READING.

Do not attempt to follow any one method—combine Sentence, and and Phonic methods. Encourage rather than criticize. Begin first reader by end of second month. Complete first reader and do considerable supplementary work. The study of new and difficult words should be made a part of each lesson. This work should be done under the direction of the teacher during the study hour or in class when the lesson is assigned. For busy work pupils should be supplied with boxes of words and boxes of letters (see catalogue of Milton Bradley & Co.) The following varieties of seat occupations are possible: Matching words to pictures, assorting words to letters, (finding all the a's, etc.) making words from letters, making sentences from words or letters, matching words to their initial letter, (ex. finding all the words beginning with a) grouping words that rhyme, filling blanks in elliptical sentences, original "stories" or sentences, about an object of interest before the child, copying verses, etc.

ARITHMETIC.

Count by ones to twenty, by tens to one hundred, then by twos from one and two to twelve; by twos to twenty, by threes to eighteen, by fours to twenty, beginning with one, two, three or four; then from twenty to fifty by ones. Write numbers to one hundred. Teach all the combinations of numbers to twelve as the limit for the year. Teach subtraction to twelve as the reverse of addition. Teach the combinations in multiplication to twelve, i. e. products, including 3x4, 2x6, 2x5, etc. Teach Roman numerals to X. Teach names and uses of the signs +, X, —, ÷. Teach the pint and quart, inch and foot, pound and ounce, cent, nickel and dime. Drill in addition until the pupil knows by sight without stopping to count, the sum in all the combinations of two digits up to twelve no "carrying" nor "borrowing."

SPELLING.

No formal spelling for five months. Write words from dictation. Groups according to form and associate according to sound. Words in reading lessons.

LANGUAGE.

Secure complete command of the words in the colloquial vocabulary possessed on entering school, work given in oral lessons—conversational style. Oral reproduction lessons based upon stories previously told. Teach a few complete poems such as The Children's Hour, Sweet and Low, What Does Little Birdie Say, Wynkin, Blynkin and Nod. Dictation exercises. Uses of period, question mark, capital letter. Induce children to talk freely and to use complete sentences. Correct errors. Use related sentences requiring suitable words to be inserted. Have children close their eyes while a story is read and then tell what they saw. Use historical poems or Stories of Columbus, Pilgrims, etc.; also Songs and Pictures.

Do not print very much. Use blackboard and unruled paper. Guard against bad position and cramped fingers. Use soft pencil and large sheets of paper. Teach free arm movement. Practice on entire work rather than letters. Get control of large muscles first. Avoid vertical and back hand. Insist on rapid movement. Practice small letters.

SECOND YEAR.

READING.

Complete the Second Reader. Supplementary reading. Require pupils to read paragraph silently then close the book and give substance. Write out questions on the lesson and have pupils answer them.

ARITHMETIC.

Review the work of the first year for two months. Teach the forty-five combinations in addition—1-1, 1-2, etc., Drill on these until children know them at sight. Teach multiplication to 10x4 and all other products under twenty-five. Teach reading of numbers to thousands and writing of numbers from dictations to three places. Teach addition of numbers to twenty-five, hence "carrying" must be taught. Teach the eighty-eight combinations in subtraction of two figures. Teach multiplication of numbers not exceeding three places by 2, 3 or 4, as multipliers, notation and numeration to five places. Teach reverse of all products up to forty as 14 ÷ 2, 42 ÷ 6 etc. "String" problems should include only the sign + or — or both or only the sign ÷ or X or both. Use easy concrete problems throughout the year. Teach Roman numerals to L. Teach One-half, One-third, One-quarter, etc, objectively.

SPELLING.

Oral, written and phonic spelling; oral spelling prominent. Dictation, Punctuation, Abbreviation—not more difficult than the reading lessons.

LANGUAGE.

Oral work—describing scenes, etc. Teach use of capital letters, comma, etc. Teach pronouns and verbs most frequently used by pupils and complete poems as Little Boy Blue, Arrow and The Song, Barefoot Boy, Village Blacksmith, The Violet, Brown Thrush, Sunbeam, Footsteps of Angels, etc. Commit memory gem each week. Biography rather than Fairy. Use of Picture stories. Use words of reading lessons to form original sentences. Hiawatha and Indian stories. Columbus, Lincoln, Longfellow, etc., tell stories rather than read them. Require written reproduction of some stories. Stories of daring and heroism should be used.

PENMANSHIP.

Review small letters. Teach capitals. Require materials to be kept in good condition. Neatness.

## FOURTH YEAR.

### READING.

Pupil must add many new words to his vocabulary and he must also be able to see the finer shades of thought brought out by the use of synonyms.

Select from lesson all figurative expressions not too difficult to interpret. Have meaning of these explained. Historical and Mythological allusions should be explained by the teacher.

The dictionary work should be continued and used in connection with every lesson.

Composition work based on reading.

### ARITHMETIC.

Master Multiplication, Division, Cancellation, Factoring, L. C. M. and G. C. D.

Mental Arithmetic.

Long Division—use such divisors as 31, 41, etc.

Definitions.

Drill work in fractions as one-half of twenty-four, one-quarter of forty-eight, one-sixth of forty-two, one-eighth of fifty-six, etc.

Complete Denominate Numbers—only practical tables.

Rectangle, triangle and circle, cube and prism, lines, angles, area, diameter, volume, etc.

Master Short Division and Roman notation.

### GEOGRAPHY.

#### First, Second and Third Years.

Work oral or selected from supplementary reading.

#### Fourth Year.

Elementary text—topic method.

Continents, Oceans, Homes of Races of Men, Form of the Earth, Proofs.

Dimensions of the Earth, Daily Motion and Results.

Study North America and the United States as to relief forms, drainage, climate, products, industries, etc.

### LANGUAGE.

Reproduction and Composition.

Parts of speech taught as to use.

Paragraphing. Use of Dictionary.

Antonyms and Synonyms, Punctuation.

Elements of sentences.

Drill on different kinds of sentences.

Memory gems. Study such poems as—The Brook, Snow Bound, Better Land, When the Leaves Turn Brown, Corn Song, etc.

Biography, such as Smith, Bradford, Boone, Washington, Clark.

### PENMANSHIP.

Use practice paper until each copy is mastered.

Insist on free arm movement.

Guard against undue tension of muscles.

Master one difficulty at a time.

See that pupils do not grip penholder and lean with face too close to paper.

Cultivate moderate speed, but allow no careless haste.

## EIGHTH YEAR.

### GEOGRAPHY.

Physical Geography—Investigate special topics.  
Commercial Geography.

### HISTORY.

Text book completed.

Composition work on Educational Institutions, Systems of Transportation, Building of Great Cities, Territorial Growth, History of Slavery.

Three months' study of Civics.

### PHYSIOLOGY.

Review work of previous year. Emphasize digestive and circulatory systems. Study muscular, nervous, osseous systems.

### ARITHMETIC.

Review Percentage, Interest, Profit and Loss, Discount.

Commission and Brokerage, Longitude and Time.

Teach Stock Investments.

Partial Payments.

Mensuration.

Metric System.

Square Root.

Review, Review, Review.

Mental Arithmetic.

### LANGUAGE.

Review Syntax, Analyze such works on Gray's Elegy, Bunker Hill Speech, etc.

Composition work.

EXCERPTS FROM THE MOUNT PLEASANT TOWNSHIP VOCATIONAL SCHOOL  
"YEAR BOOK" (1916):

There seems to be some confusion about "Hickory **Academy**" and "Hickory **High** School"; likewise, confusion prevails as to the names of Hickory High School and Mt. Pleasant Township Vocational and/or High School. According to information found in the above publication, under the heading "Historical Sketch", we find this information:

"In the year 1900 the School Board established one of the first High Schools in the county. The new High School succeeded the academy and the Board of Directors purchased the building occupied by the academy". (As noted elsewhere, this building still stands, and is used by Jay Allison for his store.)

We will continue to quote directly from this "year book" for the 1916 - 1917 school year, the second year for this "new" school in Hickory.

"The High School made rapid strides in growth. For several years the school maintained a three-year course, and then developed a four-year course. In 1914 the members of the School Board realized that the old High School building was inadequate and the school as conducted was not in keeping with the progressive spirit of the community. The board at this time consisted of the following members: W.F.Caldwell, C.C.Coates, Jos. Cowden, C.M.Berryhill and Robt. R.Hays. At a meeting in February of that year (1914) it was decided to erect a new High School building, including rooms for the grades. J.A.Cooper was appointed a member of the board and (it) organized by electing Robt. R.Hays, President; C.M.Berryhill, Vice President; C.C.Coates, Secretary, and W.F.Caldwell, Treasusrer.

The members of the board visited a number of schools and inspected new buildings in the Pittsburgh district. Desiring the services of an efficient architect, Courtney L. Whitaker of Dravosburg, Pa., was named and plans were submitted by Mr. Whitaker for a modern eight-room public school building. (Note the number of rooms.)





At a later meeting of the School Board, Prof. T.H. Dennis, State Supervisor of Agricultural Education, was present and outlined plans for a **vocational** school at this place. The board investigated the State's proposition and decided finally to establish one of the **first** vocational schools in the State. The action of the board made it necessary to materially **increase** the size of the building and add many new features in the way of equipment; also provide agricultural, manual training, model kitchens, serving and dining rooms.

No effort was spared by the board in making the school plant in Hickory one of the most substantial and modern of its kind in the State."

As for the **name** by which this "new" school was called, although it was **officially** the Mount Pleasant Township Vocational School, it was more commonly called simply "Hickory High School" as it had been before. Sometime later, it was spoken of as the Mount Pleasant Township Vocational **and** High School. Finally, @ 1945 or 1946, the REQUIRED vocational course of study was dropped, and the name became **officially** Hickory High School once again. Required courses in Home Economics (girls only) and Vo-Ag (boys only) were changed to "electives". (A copy of the "Required Course of Study" is printed elsewhere.)

In this same 1916 "year book", under the heading "Building and Equipment", we find some additional information which describes what this "new" school looked like...or at least it gives us an idea of the "facilities". Once again we quote directly:

"The school is fortunate in having a fine new brick building containing **fourteen** rooms (remember those earlier plans for eight?) used for class rooms and laboratories, besides the office, commodious store rooms, wide halls, furnace room, engine room, fan room and fresh air chamber. In addition the building has a large auditorium with a modern stage, dressing rooms, indirect lighting system, and a seating capacity for 500 people. It also has a gymnasium with 2800 square feet of floor space, dressing rooms and hot and cold shower baths. A balcony extends around three sides of the gymnasium which will easily seat 400 spectators.

The building is complete in itself. A power plant is maintained which pumps the water from the well under the building into a 5,000-gallon pressure tank, from which the whole building is supplied. Each room includes two toilet and cloak rooms and a drinking fountain. A dynamo generates electricity for power as well as furnishes electric light for the whole building. Furnaces supply warm air for heat, fans are provided for driving the heat and for ventilation, and a disposal plant in the rear takes care of all sewage."



REQUIRED "VOCATIONAL" COURSE OF STUDY  
(1916 - 1917)

COURSE OF STUDY

FIRST YEAR

Required	Elective
English (One other academic study)	Ancient History
BOYS—Soils	Latin
Poultry	Algebra
Forestry	
Shop	
Projects	
GIRLS—Home Making *	

SECOND YEAR

English (One or two other academic subjects)	Geometry
BOYS—Dairying	Latin
Farm Crops	History
Fruit Growing	
Shop	
Projects	
GIRLS—Home Making *	

† THIRD YEAR

English (One or two other academic subjects)	Algebra
BOYS—Animal Husbandry	Chemistry
Landscape Gardening	History
Vegetable Gardening	Latin
Farm Bookkeeping	German
Forge Shop	
Projects	
GIRLS—Home Making *	

† FOURTH YEAR

English (One or two other academic subjects)	Physics
BOYS—Farm Fertilizers	Geometry
Rural Law	Arithmetic
Farm Management	German
Forge Shop	Latin
GIRLS—Home Making *	History
	Civics

\* Home Making Course under revision.

† In Vocational Schools, Agriculture for the boys or Home Making for the girls is required for the first and second years. At the beginning of the third year the pupil has the option of continuing the vocational work and graduating in that department, or of changing the course and taking purely academic work for the last two years. English is required every year with all courses.

## LOCATION OF THE SCHOOL:

"The Mount Pleasant Township Vocational School is located at Hickory, a growing residence town on the Wabash-Pittsburgh Terminal Railroad, twenty miles west of Pittsburgh, twelve miles northwest of Washington Borough, eight miles from Canonsburg and Burgettstown, and seven miles from McDonald, in the midst of a splendid farming and dairying community. Improved state and county roads pass through the village. These roads with others radiate to outlying towns and boroughs, making Hickory of easy access to students within a wide radius. The train service is good. There are six trains daily each way to and from Pittsburgh and three each way to and from Avella. Therefore, Hickory is a good school center."

It should be noted at this point, that many students from outside the bounds of Mt. Pleasant Township attended "Hickory" because of the "vocational" classes being offered. Many of them rode the train daily, while others "boarded" in town. When automobiles became more common, some of these students "commuted" to school in their "Model T's", "Model A's", jalopies...etc. School, for those fortunate enough to have "wheels", became an excuse to drive the car...so was almost "fun"...at least in the "going" and "coming".

Even though the school was built as a "vocational" school, primarily for the predominantly agricultural families within the township, the "academic" offerings were not ignored.

"Our aim was to establish a school to meet the requirements of the boys and girls of this community and surrounding communities. We have kept in mind the boys and girls who desire to complete their education by taking a college course and have provided a course of study that will meet the entrance requirements of the colleges. At the same time we recognized the strong demand for an education that will give the boy or girl a broader knowledge of their responsibility to the community. It is our object to create a greater efficiency in community service and make the graduates of our school useful citizens."

Even this spacious "new" building was soon "too small" (so what else is new?) within just a few short years. Although no accurate information is available at this time, additions were made to this "new" school during the early 1920's. (Evidence from some pictures seems to indicate 1923 -1924 as the year of the addition.) The two rooms at the back of the auditorium, plus corresponding rooms both above and below were added, as well as hallways between those rooms and the existing structure.

At some time before the mid-30's, the Vo-Ag "shop" was removed from the main building and placed in a new frame structure "down back". Likewise, a similar structure was built to be used for two "grade school" classrooms. This structure was known as the "chicken coop" by the students who were in class there, namely Grades 5 & 6. In reflection and retrospect, this structure had more of the qualities of the early "one/two" room schools! A big coal furnace for heating, the smell of wet wool clothing (and other less-pleasant aromas, including a "smoking" furnace), central entrance to both rooms, **no** indoor plumbing or restroom facilities...oh, the memories!

Another "strange to our modern ears" is the following paragraph from that same "Year Book":

"RELIGIOUS ADVANTAGES:

Chapel exercises are conducted every morning in the auditorium.

Mid-week prayer meetings are conducted by the different churches.

Young people's meetings under the auspices of the churches are held on Sabbath evening.

Regular church services are held on Sabbath morning and evening, with Sabbath School in the morning."

(For those who are reading this and have never heard the term "Sabbath" used: keep in mind that the vast majority of people in the town of Hickory and the adjacent farms were "Presbyterian" by faith and used the biblical term "Sabbath" instead of the more "modern" name for the Lord's Day...Sunday. Likewise, it would have been unheard of for them to conduct a school without including the aforementioned "chapel". That's simply the "way it was" and no one expected it to be any different!)

## MAY DAY PAGEANTS:

One of the most pleasant "memories" shared by graduates of Hickory High School is that of "May Day", held each year on Memorial Day or thereabouts. Although there are no records of these events, **per se**, there **are** pictures, programs...and the memories of those who participated.

This account will be an attempt to "reconstruct" from the above items some semblance of a "history". It would be **greatly** appreciated if anyone can furnish any additional or "corrected" information.

Following her graduation from Geneva College in 1923, Miss Mary Gladys Hays came to Hickory to join her cousin, Miss Mary L. Downie, as a teacher in the "new" High School. (Miss Downie and another teacher, Miss Louisa Giffen, were also Geneva graduates.) Miss Hays, and these other teachers, shared a "memory" they had from Geneva...that of an annual "May Day" program held each Spring on campus. Since she was teaching Phys Ed, and much of a "May Day" program consisted of "dances", Miss Hays decided to see if such an event could be staged at Hickory. Early the following Spring (1924) she began to make the necessary plans and start "practicing".

The initial "production" apparently was a success, because the event became an "annual" affair at Hickory, continuing until the removal of the High School in 1959 to become part of the **new** high school at Fort Cherry. Unfortunately, this festivity which had become such an integral part of the Hickory School **and** the community became only "history" at that point in time.

For those who may be reading this with no idea as to what this "festivity" was all about, here are some of the highlights or basic components of the "pageant":

- A **theme** was selected which would help tie the various parts of the program together
- During the Spring, the Senior Class selected a "May Queen" and a "Lord of May"; the girl in second place served as the "Maid of Honor" All four high school classes chose one girl and one boy to serve as their "Class Attendants" in the Queen's "Court".
- Students in all grades, 1 - 12, participated in the "dances" which were presented to "honor" the Queen; these dances usually followed a theme as mentioned above ranging from "folk" dances to "special" ones, such as butterflies, elves, fairies, you-name-it....

- Junior and Senior boys and girls participated in the "May Pole Dance"; although supposedly to be done gracefully and formally, such was not always the case and the multicolored streamers on the poles were "mixed-up" rather than being wound neatly in a "braid" around the pole

The pageant was initially presented on the lawn of the Mt. Pleasant U.P. Church which stood next to the Hickory School. After the football field was constructed by WPA workers during the Depression of the '30's, the event was held there, being much more satisfactory for spectators and participants alike.

The basic format of the program included the following:

- "Processional": the participants were led by a "herald" or trumpeter, followed by the Lord of May; then came the "crown" bearer, the "scepter" bearer and several little "flower girls" who joined the other "small fry" in trying to see everything going on, do what they were supposed to do...and still keep going in the right direction

The "attendants" came next followed by the the "Maid of Honor, the "Queen", her "train bearers" (having the same "problems" as the above-mentioned children) and then, last but not least came all the dancers in their bright-hued costumes

- A platform for the Queen, etc. would await and once the Queen had been "crowned" by the Lord of May..."let the games begin!"
- Prior to the formation of the Hickory Band in 1941, the "Processional" (the "Grand March" from **Aida**) and all music for the dancers was furnished by pianists; later the Band played the music for both the "Processional" and the "Recessional"

It should be herein noted that all of the costumes for the dancers were made by the Home Ec Department, being stored from year to year for "recycling" when possible. The platform for the Queen's "throne" was built by the Ag boys.

Little information is available at this time about the years between Miss Hays as "Director" and the start of the long-term "Directorship" of Miss Virginia O'Bryon, presumably in 1932-33, her first year of teaching. She continued until she left in 1944 to serve in the WAVES. Upon her return to teaching, she again assumed at least co-directorship until the early '50's when several other teachers became involved. When one considers how many **left** feet were involved in these events, it seems incredible that the yearly pageants managed to succeed without major mishaps!

We would like to give you a complete "list" of May Queens, Lords of May, and Maids of Honore...but we don't have information for the years prior to the advent of "Yearbooks" in the late '30's. However, such as we have it, here is at least a "partial list" (and **PLEASE**, if anyone can "fill any gaps"...Thank You!):

	MAY QUEEN	LORD OF MAY	MAID OF HONOR
1924	Elizabeth Coleman		
1925			
1926			
1927			
1928			
1929			
1930			
1931			
1932			
1933			
1934			
1935	Ruth Allison	Loyal Hart	
1936	Alice McPeake	Reed Welch	
1937	Lillian Toth	Jay Allison	Edna Engel
1938	Mae Breowning	George Schurr	Reed Ferguson
1939	Peggy Cenderelli	GlennPollard	Sarah Paxton
1940	Martha Jane Allison	John Skrtich	
1941	Betty Miller	Louis O'Donnell	Frances Porter
1942	Lois Clark	Joe Toth	Lenore Retzer
1943	Evelyn Phillips	Jim Cenderelli	
1944	Mildred Zaculec	Don McAllister	Evelyn Robinson
1945	Ruth Johnson	Paul Smith	Helen Krese
1946	Barbara Brown	Bud Allison	Edith Dire; Dale Ashbrook
1947	Mary Lou Walters	Glen Farner	Ruth Atchison
1948	Lena McCarty	Scott Russell	Betty Kler
1949	Ann Brindak	Ralph Findling	Shirley Caldwell
1950	Donna Bowen	George Zemaitis	Geraldine Kler
1951	Barbara Caldwell	Gaeton Arcure	Ruth Huber
1952	Alice Collett	Robert Allshouse	Patty Walczyk
1953	Nancy Brown	Donald Atchison	Joann Dire
1954	Marion Henderson	Angelo Zanolli	Shirley Cole
1955	Betty Lou Zemaitis	Alex Kairush	Carole Carter
1956	Marie Ann Meriage	Eric Richards	Sandra Romanetti
1957	Alice Sherwood	John Kutchman	Judith Adams
1958	Lois AnnArcure	Gerald Sulanowski	Terry Ann Malone
1959	Rosalie Antonioli	David Williams	Nancy Cowden

THE END OF AN ERA AFTER 36 CONSECUTIVE YEARS

## HISTORY OF VOCATIONAL AGRICULTURE AND THE "FFA"

We are deeply indebted to T.Lee Carter for the following "history" about this "foundational aspect" of our educational history, especially as it is related to the building of the "new" high school in Hickory in 1915. Lee is presently Vo-Ag teacher at Fort Cherry High School, one of the few schools in the area still offering this "subject". Although Lee graduated from Fort Cherry, his class ('60), spent its first 11 years at Hickory, so that makes him an 11/12 "Hickory" person.

This "history", which is being copied almost **verbatim**, was compiled by Lee for the 50th Anniversary of the H.G.Parkinson Chapter of the FFA in 1979. We will include only those parts which are related to the program while it was still in Hickory, with a few exceptions here and there.

### "THE HERITAGE OF THE PAST....."

Early in 1913, the Board of Education of Mount Pleasant Township decided that the high school, organized in 1902, must be expanded and modernized. At about the same time, the State of Pennsylvania was making plans to set up a vocational education program on the secondary level. Fortunately the two groups were able to combine ideas and Hickory was selected as the location for one of the first five vocational high schools in our state.

The vocational agriculture "seed" was planted in 1915 by H.G.Parkinson, the **first** agriculture supervisor. This was two years before the first federal funds for courses in vocational agriculture were provided by the Smith-Highes Act. Mr. Parkinson later became a member of the Pennsylvania State College Faculty and Head of the Department of Agricultural Education.

In November 1928, a group of young men met in Kansas City to found a nationwide organization which would inspire leadership, cooperation, and citizenship among fellow students in vocational agriculture. The state of Pennsylvania recognized this new organization, the **Future Farmers of America**, the following year.

That same year, 1929, a Future Farmers of America Chapter was organized in Hickory by Mr. Eli Wiggins, the agriculture supervisor. As a tribute to the first vocational agriculture supervisor, the charter members and Mr. Wiggins named the chapter, **"H.G.Parkinson"**. Thus the H.G.Parkinson Chapter...was one of the first to be recognized by the state.

In 1932, the chapter started the Mt. Pleasant Township Community Fair. For several years it was held annually during the month of October. (See pictures elsewhere.)

The fair was an educational institution designed to raise the standards of school work, to encourage the production of better crops and livestock, to promote the best standards of living, and to increase community fellowship and cooperation. Due to war problems, the fair was discontinued after the ninth fair in 1940.

(An inserted "note" taken from the 1937 Yearbook re: the 1936 Community Fair.) "All patrons and friends of the Mount Pleasant Township Public Schools participated in the Fifth Annual Fair. One of the keys to successful social living is cooperation and this event serves as a mean to this end.

The 1936 Community and School Fair was held in the school building on October 15, 16, and 17. G.E. Baker and Joseph Scott, Agriculture teachers, assisted by the boys in the Agriculture Department, were in charge of this highly commended exhibition. The new feature of the fair this year were athletic contests for all ages in the school.

(In addition to) exhibits and displays, the opening event of the fair was a program featuring (1) a one-act play by some high school students under the direction of Miss Elsie Cowden, and (2) a community minstrel show under the direction of Miss Della Colwes. Other events included horseshoe pitching, the Tri-County FFA Judging Contest, a talking picture "Three Women", a pet parade and the annual coon hunt."

(We now return to Lee Carter's narrative.) "Chapter members soon became involved in local and state FFA activities. In 1933, the chapter demonstration team placed first in the state contest with a demonstration on Butchering (Hog Skinning). Other chapter members became more actively involved in the FFA through participation in state project book contests and public speaking contests. Father and Son Banquets were instituted in the early years of the chapter with the Home Economics Department always preparing and serving the dinner.

As a result of FFA member involvement in local and state activities, many members soon were recognized for their efforts. **Sylvester Casciola**, a charter member of the chapter, received the **first** Keystone Farmer Degree in 1934 and the **first** American Farmer Degree in 1936.

Mr. Wiggins provided the leadership needed to build a strong foundation for the new organization. He continued to advise the FFA until 1936 when Mr. George E. Baker became the agriculture supervisor. The chapter continued to develop under this new leadership. Many of the activities of the chapter, such as the community fair, were continued. Excellence in vocational agriculture project programs was achieved during this time. In 1937, the chapter ranked second in the state for vocational agriculture projects carried during the previous year.



The Hickory FFA members honored their mothers with the first annual Mothers Night in 1939. During this period many of the chapter members enjoyed field trips to the McMillan Milling Company, Decatur, Indiana. These trips were sponsored by the local Master Mix feed dealer, Mr. Willard Allison, and the McMillan Feed Mill. Arthur Smith served as one of five officers of the Pennsylvania Keystone Future Farmers of America. Mr. Baker continued to advise the FFA until he became Principal of Hickory High School in 1942.

During the war years of the forties, the **status quo** of the chapter was maintained by several teachers. Nevertheless, several students continued to benefit from the aims and purposes of the FFA.

(In 1949, following his "student teaching" at Hickory, Robert J. Loughry, was hired as the Supervisor of "Vo-Ag" and Advisor for the FFA.) During the 1950's the members of the chapter received many honors as a result of the guidance of...Mr. Loughry. Most of the awards were in the area of project program development resulting in many outstanding project books for the state contest.

Since many of the members lived on dairy farms, dairy production was emphasized. The chapter was recognized by the National Dairy Products Corporation with the Efficient Production Award for superior achievement in 1953-54-55-56. In 1951, the first DeKalb Agricultural Accomplishment Award was presented to the outstanding senior. Mr. Loughry continued to serve as the Supervisor of "Vo-Ag" and Advisor of the FFA chapter during the final years of Hickory High School and during the early years of Fort Cherry High School. In 1964, he became the Assistant Principal of Fort Cherry and T.Lee Carter, a recent graduate of Penn State was hired in his place.

Although the following items are so-called "Fort Cherry" milestones, they are included in this "history" because they are both "historic" to the FFA and because those involved were from Mt. Pleasant Township, and products of the Hickory Grade School even if not specifically "Hickory High School".

A milestone of progress occurred in the fall of 1969 when Nancy Stewart (of Hickory) became the **first girl** to enroll in the vocational agriculture program. Nancy participated in many activities during her three years in the program; she served as a chapter officer and received the Keystone Farmer Degree in 1973, another milestone.

Leadership development has been a strong aspect of our chapter from its founding. In recent years Thomas Herbst, Lindy Morrison, and Bryan Bell have served as state officers in the Pennsylvania State Association of the FFA.

The chapter was recognized on the national level in 1977 and 1978 by receiving the National Chapter Award. This award honors the nation's most active FFA chapters (and) encourages FFA chapters and members to actively participate in a wide variety of "prescribed" educational FFA activities.

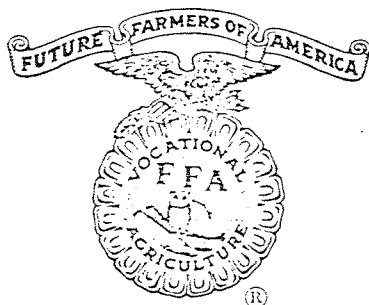
Prior to the closing of "Hickory" High School as a high school, 36 members of the chapter had received the Keystone Farmer Degree and two, Sylvester Casciola and George Paxton, the American Farmer Award.

Mr. Carter closes his "history" with the following statement: "The 'seed' planted 64 years ago has germinated, found fertile soil, been nurtured and cared for by different 'gardeners' and has grown into the fruitful organization of today ...the H.G.Parkinson Chapter of Fort Cherry High School."

LIST OF "KEYSTONE FARMERS" FROM HICKORY HIGH SCHOOL:

1934 Sylvester Casciola  
1938 Joseph A. Cowden, Jr.; Glenn Hicks; Jay McCarrell;  
Edwin Miller  
1939 Robert M. Smith; Robert Wilson  
  
1940 Irvin R. Fisher; Arthur Smith; LeRoy Walker;  
Clifford Williams  
1941 Henry Ahrns; George Barney; Carl Fisher; Michael Herrman  
1942 Clair Cowden; George Paxton; Rollon Swihart  
1943 Charles Alrutz  
1945 Robert Lowry  
1946 Lee Robinson  
  
1953 Donald Hutton; Donald Miller  
1954 Joseph Bongiorno; Robert Carter; McCarrell Carter;  
Edward White  
1955 Henry Engel; David Johnston  
1956 Elden Carter; Guy Cowden; David Herriott  
1957 Van Cowden  
1958 Rex Smith; Charles Wilson; Sam Wilson  
  
1960 Lee Carter  
1961 Leroy Plance; Robert Romanetti; Donald Ryburn  
1964 Jay Carter

(NOTE: The early 1960's recipients have been listed in this group because they **began** their "Vo-Ag" training at Hickory High School, even if they received their awards as students at Fort Cherry.)



## A BRIEF HISTORY OF GIRL SCOUTS IN HICKORY:

Although "scouting", **per se**, is not an integral part of the organized educational system, it is, nevertheless, of significance ...not only from an historical perspective but also from the fact that **learning** is as basic to scouting as it is to education.

There have been Girl Scouts organized in Hickory for almost as long as they have been organized anywhere...over 75 years. Soon after the opening of the "new" high school in Hickory, several young, "energetic" and single women "hit town" as teachers in the high school. One of them was Mary L. Downie, an "active, outdoor" person; another was Margaret "Peg" Hare, of Pittsburgh. Miss Hare seemed to think that the "personality" of Miss Downie was well-suited to the new organization known as "Girl Scouts" and told her all she knew about them, since Pittsburgh already had several troops. The "die was cast", rather quickly, for within a year of coming to Hickory to teach, "Miss Downie" had started HICKORY TROOP #1!

The Hickory Troop #1 was organized during the 1920 - 1921 school year. "Captain" Downie attended the 7th Encampment of the First Girl Scout Training School at Long Pond in Massachusetts in June 1921. The Hickory troop "went to camp" along the Slippery Rock Creek at least twice during the summer of 1921. Miss Downie was from Beaver Falls and knew the leaders of the College Hill Boy Scout Troop, sooooooo... needless to say, a grand time was held by all!

There are no records to verify just how many girls were in this initial troop, but from the pictures we have, it would seem that by the second year, there were 21 or 22 girls. Even during that first summer of 1921, the pictures verify that 20 girls "went to camp" as Girl Scouts.

"Camping" for these early scouts would be called "primitive" with our present-day standards. Tents, old army cots, campfire cooking, use of "latrines", "bugs" (no such things as "OFF", "RAID", etc.). As you can see in the pictures, (see picture section) camp attire wasn't "shorts" or "cut-offs" but "bloomers", "knickers", long stockings, wool bathing suits...get the picture? (And it would be more than likely that, even under these conditions, the participants had **more** fun than most girls would today!)

Interest waned to some degree following "Captain Downie's" marriage to J.Thompson White in 1924. Many of the original "core" group either had already graduated from high school or would soon do so. However, the troop did not "die"; during the mid- to late-30's, under the leadership of Miss Elsie Reed and Miss Margaret Myers, the troop flourished once again. (The 1937 Yearbook states that there were 27 members.) This resurgence of "life" in the troop lasted through the War years and into the early '50's. However, following Miss Reed's marriage and the untimely death of Miss Myers in a plane crash, the lack of leadership once more became a factor...and the troop, **per se**, slid down the road to oblivion.

Although leadership was one factor, it was not the only one. As more and more "outside activities" became available for girls, the area of "scouting" simply became one of many opportunities...not the "only game in town" as it had been for so many years. Another factor would probably be the "merger" of the Mt. Pleasant Township School District with three others to form the new Fort Cherry School District. Therefore, the "school" was no longer the common denominator in the lives of the children of the community. New friends weren't always "from Hickory", there were more "activities" being offered within the school, and the whole spirit of "community" was lost...not just for the Girl Scouts, but in many other areas as well.

Since the mid-1960's, Brownie troops, "Junior" troops, and "Senior" troops have been in existence, but not to the degree already mentioned. As stated, Girl Scouts became simply one "option" among many. Families became torn into segments of endeavor, trying to keep pace with the interests and desires of the children. As with all activities, it's not only the desire of the children to "belong" to a group or participate in an activity...it's the commitment of the parents to "provide" for or "support" that desire, with transportation, equipment, time, energy, etc. And, no matter how strong the "desire" of the child or the "commitment" of the parent, there are only so many hours in the day or dollars in the bank.

In 1971, at the time of her 50th Anniversary as a registered Girl Scout, Mrs. Mary D. White ("Captain Downie") was given Girl Scouts' highest honor, the "Thanks Badge", in recognition of her many years of service to scouting. Following her marriage and "retirement" from active troop leadership, Mrs. White had remained a registered scout, and helped the local leaders in whatever way was needed...from teaching "knot tying" to "hauling kids" to serving on the Scout Committee of the Hickory Women's Club, sponsors of the Girl Scouts for many years.

#### BOY SCOUTS IN HICKORY:

There has been no intentional disregard on the part of this compiler of the "history" of Boy Scouts in Hickory. Very little is known about the "early years" of Boy Scouts other than the fact that they were first organized in the early '30's by Rev. C.S. Thomas, soon after his becoming pastor of the Mt. Prospect Presbyterian Church in 1930. We would be deeply indebted to anyone who can furnish us with any information about the "history" of the Boy Scouts, the "early" history in particular. And, thank you.

**LUCKEY'S IMPROVED**

**Common School Register,**

FOR

**Public and Private Schools,**

WITH

BLANKS FOR MONTHLY REPORTS,

BY

**GEO. J. LUCKEY, A.M.**

SUPT. OF

**PITTSBURGH PUBLIC SCHOOLS.**

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PUBLISHED BY

S. A. CLARKE & CO.,

PITTSBURGH, PA.

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"Entered according to act of Congress, in the Year of our Lord 1873, by S. A. Clarke & Co., in the Clerk's office of the District Court of the United States for the western District of Pennsylvania."

Mary H. Pleasant

Report of Mary A. Larnach Teacher of Cherry Valley

ATTENDANCE.

NAMES OF PUPILS.	Age.	DAYS OF THE MONTH.																								Total attendance in month.	Total attendance in term.	Progress.	Conduct.	MISCELLANEOUS			
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	TOTALS AND AV.	No. of different scholars to school since 1st of					Whole No. in attendance	Average attendance	Per cent. of attendance	Pr. ct. of att. during t
Jones Charles	6																								22	22	5	4	No. of different scholars to school since 1st of	Whole No. in attendance	Average attendance	Per cent. of attendance	Pr. ct. of att. during t
Jones William	15																								12	12	5	5					
Jones Peter	2																								21	21	5	5					
Jones Silas	6																								21	21	4	5					
Jones Henry	15																								5	5	4	5	BRANCHES OF	Alphabet	Spelling	Reading	Writing
Jones Samuel	15																								11	11	4	5					
Jones John	11																								9	9	4	4					
Jones Mrs. White	15																								15 1/2	15 1/2	5	5					
Jones Moses	16																								20	20	4	5					
Jones Frank	15																								6	6	3	5					
Jones Robert	5																								19	19	4	5					
Jones Mrs. Thompson																									13	13	5	4					

12  
13  
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17  
18  
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22  
23  
24

Received of John E. Stewart order No. 41 for \$28.00 for 1 month salary being in full for 6 months salary in school No. 4 for the year ending June 1st 1879

John E. Stewart secy,      Mrs. P. White

Report of

*Wm. Masam*  
*John McEroy*

Teacher of

DISTRICT  
*Cherry Vale*

ATTENDANCE.

BOOKS USED.
<i>Bible</i>
<i>Catechism</i>
<i>Wilson's Speller</i>
<i>Primary Speller</i>
<i>Wilson's Series</i>
<i>Ch. Readers</i>
<i>1<sup>st</sup></i>
<i>2<sup>nd</sup></i>
<i>3<sup>rd</sup></i>
<i>4<sup>th</sup></i>
<i>Arithmetic Green-</i>
<i>leaf's Series</i>
<i>Stoddard's Mental</i>
<i>Monteith's &amp; Cornell's</i>
<i>Geographies</i>
<i>Burrows's &amp; Bent's Grammar</i>
<i>Marie's Algebra</i>

No. of pupils without necessary books .....  
 " days school open during month ..... *9*  
 " " " during term till date *4*

VISITS.		BY WHOM.	Date.	Length.
<i>2</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>J. D. Campbell</i>		
<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>Gen. McCannell</i>		
<i>5</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>Geo. Carter</i>		
<i>8</i>	<i>4</i>			

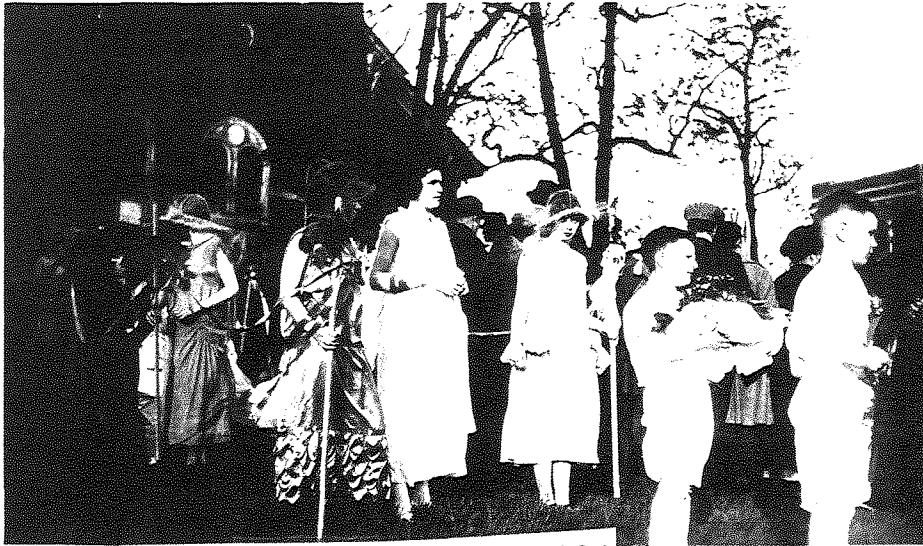
CERTIFICATE.

I certify that the foregoing Report of the number of scholars belonging to School since the first of June, attendance, books used, branches taught, progress and conduct of pupils, visits of school officers and others, and of the number of days the School was in operation during the past month and term, is just and true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

*Wm. A. Hamerhill*, Teacher.  
*October 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1869.*

APPROVAL.

Filed, examined, and approved, this *6<sup>th</sup>*  
 day of *November*, 1869.  
*J. S. [Signature]*, Secretary.



FIRST MAY DAY PROCESSIONAL 1924  
Elizabeth Coleman, Queen



"HERALD" LORAIN PAU  
1935



QUEEN AND COURT 1953



PROCESSIONAL 1936



MAY POLE 1945





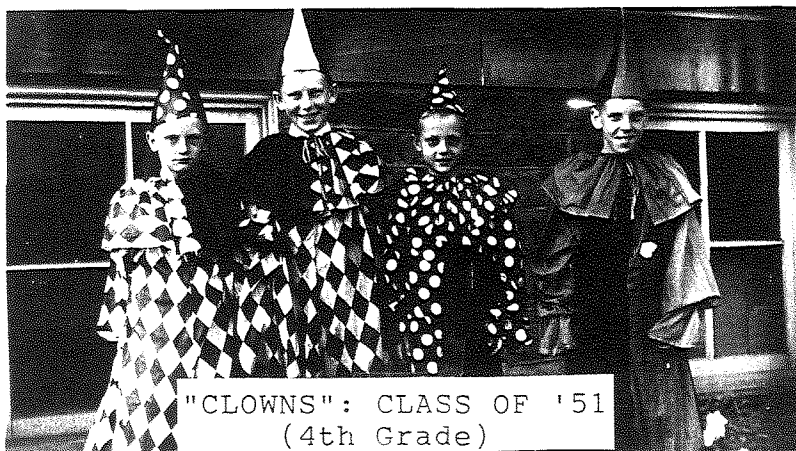
HIGH SCHOOL "SCOTCH" DANCERS  
(Early '40's)



"BUTTERFLIES"



CLASS OF '51  
(4th Grade)



"CLOWNS": CLASS OF '51  
(4th Grade)



CLASS OF '50  
@ 1944



HICKORY GIRL SCOUT TROOP #1  
1922



HICKORY GIRL SCOUT TROOP #1  
1942



READY FOR A HIKE?  
1922

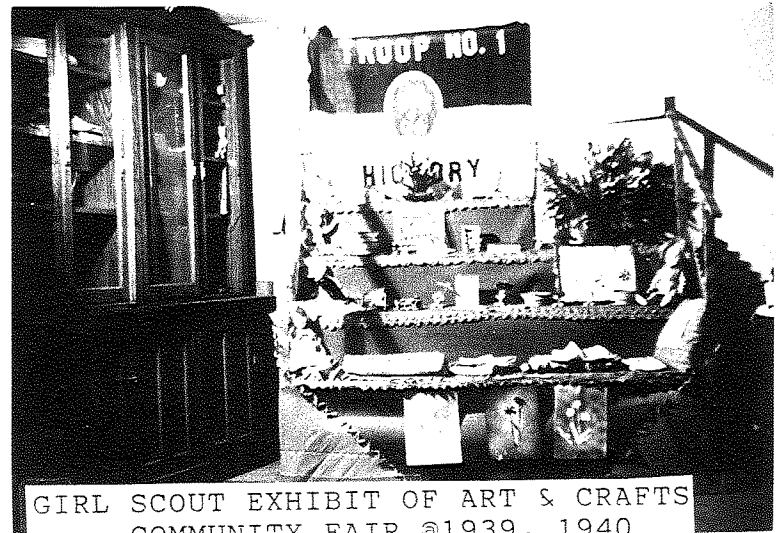


"CAPTAIN DOWNIE"  
First Leader

MARY MARQUIS, Patrol Leader  
(Hickory '22)



HOW COULD THEY SWIM IN THESE?  
(Front center: Myrtle Marquis,  
Mary Hensel)



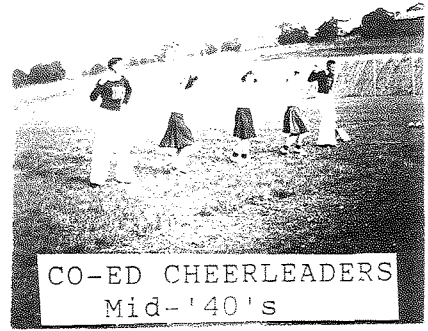
GIRL SCOUT EXHIBIT OF ART & CRAFTS  
COMMUNITY FAIR @1939, 1940

SPELLING CONTEST WINNERS: COMMUNITY FAIR  
(Fall 1940)





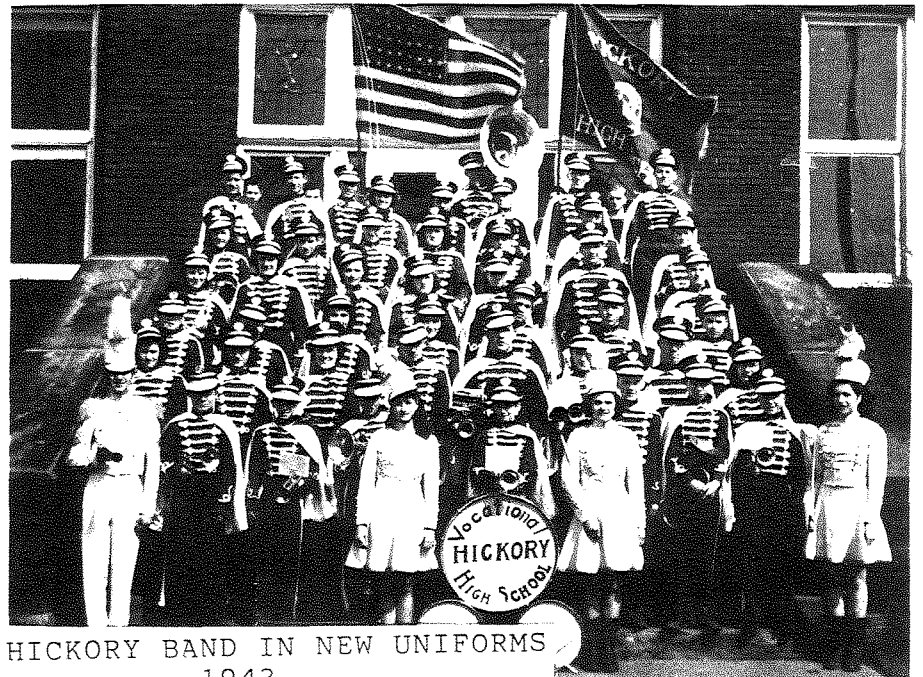
HICKORY BAND FORMED 1941  
Mr. Cornelius, Dir.



CO-ED CHEERLEADERS  
Mid-'40's



ED MORRIS, CUSTODIAN  
1925 - 1950



HICKORY BAND IN NEW UNIFORMS  
1943



MR. BAKER AND THE GRADE SCHOOL TEACHERS ca. 1943  
FRONT: Orella Acheson (1st); Elsie Reed (6th); Flora Carlisle (8th);  
Mrs. Tillie Allison  
BACK: Virginia Caldwell (3rd); Marthetta McCarrell (4th);  
Milocent Herriott (5th); Lois Acheson (7th)



GEORGE SCHOOL (Near present Southview)



"OLD" HICKORY SCHOOL



"NEW" FORT DONALDSON SCHOOL @1913

FRONT: Wilford Graham, Louis Alrutz, Dorothy D., Lawrence Lowry,  
Velma White, Tom Alrutz

BACK: Sylvia S., Grace D., Miss Brown, Edna D., Madeline D.,  
Margaret Graham



HICKORY ACADEMY (Date unknown)